Worldwide Caution

Terrorism

7/2/2018

This latest update to the Department of State's Worldwide Caution provides U.S. citizens with general information regarding terrorist activities, political violence, and criminal activity that transpire abroad, as well as specific recommendations on how to prepare for possible contingencies, receive information on breaking security events, and ensure that travelers can be contacted in an emergency. This version replaces the Worldwide Caution dated January 11, 2018.

As terrorist attacks, political violence (including demonstrations), criminal activities, and other security incidents often take place without any warning, U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance and practice good situational awareness when traveling abroad. When planning a trip and prior to departing the United States, American citizens should consult country-specific Travel Advisories and information pages on travel.state.gov.

Travelers are also urged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency. The Department uses these security messages to convey information about terrorist threats, security incidents, planned demonstrations, natural disasters, etc. In an emergency, please contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate or call the following numbers: **1-888-407-4747** (toll-free in the United States and Canada) or **1-202-501-4444** from other countries.

U.S. government facilities worldwide remain in a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or periodically suspend public services to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Terrorist groups including ISIS, al-Qa'ida, their associates, and those inspired by such organizations, are intent on attacking U.S. citizens wherever they are. Extremists may use conventional or non-conventional weapons to target U.S. government and private interests. Terrorists are increasingly using less sophisticated methods, including the use of edged weapons, pistols, and vehicles as weapons, to effectively target crowds. Extremists increasingly aim to assault "soft" targets, such as:

high-profile public events (sporting contests, political rallies, demonstrations, holiday events, celebratory gatherings, etc.)
hotels, clubs, and restaurants
places of worship
schools
parks
shopping malls and markets
tourism infrastructure
public transportation systems
airports

In multiple regions, terrorists, guerrilla groups, and criminals seek to kidnap U.S. citizens to finance their operations or for political purposes. The Department also remains concerned that terrorists could again seek to down aircraft using concealed explosives or hijack commercial flights.

Private U.S. citizens should not travel to any country to participate in armed conflict. U.S. citizens are reminded that fighting on behalf of, or providing other forms of support to, designated terrorist organizations can constitute the provision of material support for terrorism, which is a serious crime that can result in penalties, including prison time and large fines.

For further information:

See the Department of State's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Advisories, and Country Information.

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

The Department of State's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides several resources to enhance the safety and security of the U.S. private sector abroad. Additional information on OSAC can be found on OSAC.gov or by following OSAC on Twitter.

Mariners and U.S. citizens considering maritime travel should also review information at the websites of the National Geospatial Agency, the Maritime Security Communications with Industry Portal, and the U.S. Coast Guard for information related to maritime and port security globally.